

THE
HISTORY
OF
T O M W H I T E,
THE POSTILION. -



PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY B. & J. JOHNSON, No.
147 HIGH-STREET.

1800.

[Price 4 Cents Or 2s. 4d. per. doz.]

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TOM WHITE was one of the best drivers of a Post-chaise on the Bath Road.—Tom was the son of an honest labourer at a little village in Wiltshire: he was an active industrious boy, and as soon as he was big enough he left his father, who was burthened with a numerous family, and went to live with Farmer Hodges, a sober worthy man in the same village. He drove the waggon all the week; and on Sundays though he was now grown up, the farmer required him to attend the Sunday School, carried on under the inspection of Dr. Shepherd, the worthy Vicar, and always made him read his Bible, in the evening after he had served his beasts, and would have turned him out of his service if he had ever gone to the ale-house for his own pleasure.

Tom by carrying some waggon-loads of faggots to the Bear-inn at Devizes, soon made many acquaintances in the stable-yard. He compared his own Carter's frock, and shoes thick set with nails, with the smart red jackets and tight boots of the Post-boys, and grew ashamed of his own homely dress; he was resolved to drive a chaise, to get money, and to see the world. Foolish fellow! he never considered, that, though it is true, a waggoner works hard all day, yet he gets a quiet evening, and undisturbed rest at night. However there must be chaise-boys as well as plough-boys, there was no great harm in the change. The evil company to which it exposed him, was the chief mischief. He left farmer Hodges though not without sorrow at quitting so kind a master, and got himself hired at the Black Bear.

Notwithstanding the temptations to which he was now exposed, Tom's good education stood by him for some time. At first he was frightened to hear the oaths and wicked words which are too often uttered in a stable-yard. However, though he thought it wrong, he had not the cou-

rage to reprove it, and the next step to being easy at seeing others sin, is to sin ourselves. By degrees he began to think it manly, and a mark of spirit in others to swear; though the force of good habits was so strong, that at first when he swore it was with fear and in a low voice. But he was soon laughed out of his sheepishness, as they called it; and though he never became so prophane and blasphemous as some of his companions, for he never swore in cool blood or in mirth as so many do, yet he would too often use a dreadful bad word when he was in a passion with his horses. And here I cannot but drop a hint on the great folly as well as wickedness of being in a great rage with poor beasts, who not having the gift of reason, cannot be moved like human creatures, with all the wicked words that are said to them; but who, unhappily, having the gift of feeling, suffer as much as human creatures can do, at the cruel and unnecessary beatings given them. He had been bred up to think that drunkenness was a great sin, for he never saw farmer Hodges drunk in his life, and where a farmer is sober, his men are less apt to

ep to drink, or if they do, the master can re-
o fin prove them with the better grace.

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Tom was not naturally fond of drink, yet for the sake of being thought merry company, and a hearty fellow, he often drank more than he ought. As he had been used to go to church twice on a Sunday while he lived with the farmer, who seldom used his horses on that day except to carry his wife to church behind him, Tom felt a little uneasy when he was sent the very first Sunday a long journey with a great family; for I cannot conceal the truth that too many gentle folks will travel when there is no necessity for it on a Sunday, and when Monday would answer the end just as well. This is a great grief to all good and sober people, both rich and poor. However he kept his thoughts to himself, though he could not now and then help thinking how quietly things were going on at the farmer's, whole waggoner on a funday led as easy a life as if he had been a gentleman. But he soon lost all thoughts of this kind, and did not know a Sunday from a Monday. Tom went on prosperously, as it is called, for three or four years, got plenty of money, and lost

but saved not a Shilling. As soon as his horses were once in the stable, whoever would might see them fed for Tom.—He had other fish to fry.—Fives, cards, cudgel-playing, laying wagers, and keeping loose company, each of which he at first disliked, and then practised, ran away with all his money, and all his spare time; and though he was generally in the way as soon as the horses were ready, (because if there was no driving there was no pay,) yet he did not care whether the carriage was clean or the horses looked well, if the harness was whole, or the horses were shod. The certainty that the gains of to-morrow would make up for the extravagance of to-day, made him quite thoughtless and happy, for he was young, active, and healthy, and never foresaw that a rainy day might come, when he would want what he now squandered.

One day being a little flustered with liquor as he was driving his return chaise through Brentford, he saw just before him another empty carriage, driven by one of his acquaintance; he whipped his horses, resolving to outstrip the other, and swearing dreadfully that he would be at

the Red Lion first—for a pint—done, cried the other—a wager.—Both cut and spurred the poor beasts with the usual fury, as if their credit had been really at stake, or their lives had depended on this foolish contest. Tom's chaise had now got up to that of his rival, and they drove along side of each other with great fury and many imprecations. But in a narrow part, Tom's chaise being in the middle, with his antagonist on one side, and a cart driving against him on the other, the horses reared, the carriages got entangled, Tom roared out a great oath to the other to stop, which he either could not, or would not do, but returned a horrid imprecation that he would win the wager if he was alive. Tom's horses took fright and he was thrown to the ground with great violence. As soon as he could be got from under the wheels, he was taken up senseless; his leg was broke in two places, and his body much bruised. Some people whom the noise had brought together, put him into the post-chaise, in which the waggoner kindly assisted, but the other driver seemed careless and indifferent, and drove off, observing with a brutal coolness, "I am sorry I have lost

my pint; I should have beat him hollow, had it not been for this *little accident*." Some gentlemen who came out of the Inn, after reprimanding this savage, inquired who he was, wrote to inform his master, and got him discharged: resolving, that neither they nor any of their friends would ever employ him, and he was long out of place.

Tom was taken to one of those excellent hospitals with which London abounds. His agonies were dreadful, his leg was set, and a high fever came on. As soon as he was left alone to reflect on his condition, his first thought was that he should die, and his horror was inconceivable.—Alas!" said he "what will become of my poor soul? I am cut off in the very commission of three great sins:—I was drunk, I was in a horrible passion, and I had oaths and blasphemies in my mouth."—He tried to pray, but he could not, his mind was all distraction, and he thought he was so very wicked that God would not forgive him: because, says he, "I have sinned against light and knowledge, and a sober education, and good examples, and I deserve nothing

but punishment."—At length he grew light-headed and there was little hopes of his life. Whenever he came to his senses for a few minutes, he cried out, " O ! that my old companions could now see me, surely they would take warning by my sad fate, and repent before it is too late."

By the blessing of God on the skill of the surgeon, and the care of the nurses he however grew better in a few days. And here let me stop to remark, what a mercy it is that we live in a christian country, where the poor, when sick, or lame, or wounded, are taken as much care of as any gentry: nay in some respects more, because in hospitals and infirmaries there are more doctors and surgeons to attend, than most private gentlefolks can afford to have at their own houses whereas *there never was an hospital in the whole heathen world.* Blessed be God for this, among the thousand other excellent fruits of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION !

It was eight weeks before Tom could be taken out of bed. This was a happy affliction ; for this long sickness and soli-

tude gave him time to reflect on his past life. He began seriously to hate those darling sins which had brought him to the brink of ruin. He could now pray heartily: he confessed and lamented his iniquities with many tears, and began to hope that the mercies of God, through the merits of a Redeemer, might yet be extended to him on his sincere repentance. He resolved never more to return to the same evil courses, but he did not trust in his own strength, but prayed that God would give him grace for the future, as well as pardon for the past. He remembered, and he was humbled at the thought that he used to have short fits of repentance, and to form resolutions of amendment, in his wild and thoughtless days, and often when he had a bad headache after a drinking bout, or had lost his money at all fours, he vowed never to drink or play again. But as soon as his head was well, and his pocket recruited, he forgot all his resolutions. And how should it be otherwise? for he trusted in his own strength, he never prayed to God to strengthen him, nor ever avoided the next temptation.

The case was now different. Tom began to find that *his strength was perfect weakness*, and that he could do nothing without the Divine assistance, for which he prayed heartily and constantly. He sent home for his Bible and Prayer-book, which he had not opened for two years, and which had been given him when he left the Sunday School. He spent the chief part of his time in reading them and thus derived great comfort, as well as great knowledge. The study of the bible filled his heart with gratitude to God who had not cut him off in the midst of his sins, but given him space for repentance; and the agonies he had lately suffered with his broken leg increased his thankfulness, that he had escaped the more dreadful pain of eternal misery. And here let me remark what encouragement this is for rich people to give away Bibles and good books, and not lose all hope though for a time they see little or no good effect from it. According to all appearance, Tom's were never likely to do him any good, and yet his generous benefactor who had cast his bread upon the waters, found it after many days, for this bible which had lain untouched for

years, was at last made the means of his reformation. God will work in his own good time.

As soon as he got well, and was discharged from the hospital, Tom began to think he must return to get his bread. At first he had some scruples about going back to his old employ : but says he, sensibly enough, gentle folks must travel, travellers must have chaises, and chaises must have drivers ; 'tis a very honest calling, and I don't know that goodness belongs to one sort of business more than another ; and he who can be good in a state of great temptation, provided the calling be lawful, and the temptations are not of his own seeking, and he be diligent in prayer, may be better than another man for aught I know : and *all that belongs to us is to do our duty in that state of life in which it shall please God to call us.* Tom had rubbed up his catechism at the hospital and 'tis a pity that people don't look at their catechism sometimes when they are grown up ; for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children : nay better, for though the answers contained in it are intended for children

to *repeat*, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in *practice*.

Tom now felt grieved that he was obliged to drive on Sundays. But people who are in earnest, and have their hearts in a thing can find helps in all cases. As soon as he had set down his company at their stage, and had seen his horses fed, says Tom, "A man who takes care of his horses will generally think it right to let them rest an hour or two at least. In every town it is a chance but there may be a church open during part of that time. If the prayers should be over, I'll try hard for the sermon; and if I dare not stay to the Sermon, it is a chance but I may catch the prayers; it is worth trying for, however; and as I used to make nothing of making a push, for the sake of getting an hour to gamble, I need not grudge to take a little pains extraordinary to serve God. By this watchfulness he soon got to know the hours of service at all the towns on the road he travelled, and while the horses fed, Tom went to church; and it became a favourite proverb with him

that *prayers and provender binder no man's journey.*

At first his companions wanted to laugh and make sport of this—but when they saw that no lad on the road was up so early or worked so hard as Tom: when they saw no chaise so neat, no glasses so bright, no harness so tight, no driver so diligent, so clean, or so civil, they found he was no subject to make sport at. Tom indeed was very careful in looking after the linch-pins, in never giving his horses too much water when they were hot; nor, whatever was his haste, would he ever gallop them up hill, strike them across the head, or when tired, cut and slash them in driving on the stones, as soon as he got into a town, as some foolish fellows do. What helped to cure Tom of these bad practices, was that remark he met with in the Bible, that *a good man is merciful to his beast.* He was much moved on reading the Prophet Jonah, to observe what compassion the great God of heaven and earth had for poor beasts: for one of the reasons there given, why the Almighty was unwilling to destroy the great city of Nineveh was, *because there was much*

cattle in it. After this Tom never could bear to see a wanton stroke inflicted.

Tom soon grew rich for one in his station, for every gentleman on the road would be driven by no other lad if *careful Tom* was to be had. Being diligent, he *got* a great deal of money; being frugal, he *spent* but little; and having no vices, he *wasted* none. He soon found out that there was some meaning in that text which says, that *Godliness bath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*: for the same principles which make a man sober and honest, have also a natural tendency to make him healthy and rich; while a drunkard and a spendthrift can hardly escape being sick, and a beggar in the end. Vice is the parent of misery here as well as hereafter.

After a few years Tom begged a holiday, and made a visit to his native village; his good character had got thither before him. He found his father was dead, but during his long illness Tom had supplied him with money, and by allowing him a trifle every week, had had the honest satisfaction of keeping him

from the parish. Farmer Hodges was still living, but being grown old and infirm, he was desirous to retire from business. He retained a great regard for his old servant, Tom; and finding he was worth money, and knowing he knew something of country business, he offered to let him have a small farm at an easy rate, and promised his assistance in the management for the first year, with the loan of a small sum of money, that he might set out with a pretty stock. Tom thanked him with tears in his eyes, went back and took a handsome leave of his master, who made him a present of a horse and cart, in acknowledgement of his long and faithful services; for, says he, "I have saved many horses by Tom's care and attention, and I could well afford to do the same by every servant who did the same by me; and should be a richer man at the end of every year by the same generosity, provided I could meet with just and faithful servants who deserved the same rewards."

Tom was soon settled in his new farm, and in less than a year had got every thing neat and decent about him. Farmer Hodges's long experience and friendly

advice, joined to his own industry and hard labour, soon brought the farm to great perfection. The regularity, sobriety, peaceableness, and piety of his daily life, his constant attendance at Church twice every Sunday, and his decent and devout behaviour when there, soon recommended him to the notice of Dr. Shepherd who was still living, a pattern of zeal, activity, and benevolence to all parish priests. The Dr. soon began to hold up Tom, or as we must now more properly term him, Mr. Thomas White, to the imitation of the whole parish, and the frequent, and condescending conversation of this worthy clergyman, contributed no less than his preaching to the improvement of his new parishioner.

Farmer White soon found out that a dairy could not well be carried on without a mistress, and began to think seriously of marrying; he prayed to God to direct him in so important a business. He knew that a tawdry, vain, dressy girl, was not likely to make good cheese and butter, and that a worldly and ungodly woman would make a sad wife and mistress of a family. He soon heard of a young woman of ex-

cellent character, who had been bred up by the vicar's lady, and still lived in the family as upper maid. She was prudent, sober, industrious and religious. Her neat, modest, and plain appearance at church, (for she was seldom seen any where else out of her master's family,) was an example to all persons in her station, and never failed to recommend her to strangers, even before they had an opportunity of knowing the goodness of her character. It was her character, however, which recommended her to farmer White. He knew that *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*: "aye, and not only praised, but chosen too," says farmer White, as he took down his hat from the nail on which it hung, in order to go and wait on Dr. Shepherd, to break his mind and ask his consent; for he thought it would be a very unhandsome return for all the favours he was receiving from his Minister, to decoy away his faithful servant from her place without his consent.

This worthy gentleman, though sorry to lose so valuable a member of his little

family, did not scruple a moment about parting with her, when he found it would be so greatly to her advantage. Tom was agreeably surprised to hear she had saved fifty pounds by her frugality. The Dr. married them himself, farmer Hodges being present.

In the afternoon Dr. Shepherd condescended to call on farmer and Mrs. White, to give a few words of advice on the new duties they had entered into; a common custom with him on those occasions. He often took an opportunity to drop, in the most kind and tender way, a hint on the great indecency of making marriages, christenings, and above all funerals, days of riot and excess, as is too often the case in country villages. The expectation that the vicar might possibly drop in, in his walks, on these festivities, sometimes restrained excessive drinking, and improper conversation, even among those farmers who were not restrained by higher motives, as farmer and Mrs. White were.

What the Dr. said was always in such a cheerful, good-humoured way, that it

was sure to increase the pleasure of that day, instead of damping it. Well, farmer, said he, and you my faithful Sarah, any other friend might recommend peace and agreement to you on your marriage ; but I on the contrary recommend cares and strifes.* The company stared—but Sarah, who knew that her old master was a facetious gentleman, and always had some good meaning behind, looked serious, “ Cares and strifes, Sir, said the farmer, what do you mean ? I mean said he, for the first, that your cares shall be who shall please God most, and your strifes, who shall serve him best, and do your duty most faithfully. Thus, all your cares and strifes being employed to the highest purposes, all petty cares and worldly strifes shall be at an end.

“ Always remember both of you, that you “ have still a better friend than each other.”—The company stared again, and thought no woman could have so good a friend as her husband. “ As you have chosen each other from the best motives, continued the Doctor, you have every reasonable ground to hope for happiness ;

**See Dodd's Sayings.*

but as this world is a foil, in which troubles and misfortunes will spring up; troubles from which you cannot save one another: then remember, " 'tis the best wisdom to go to that friend who is always near, always willing, and always able to help you, and that friend is God."

" Sir, said Farmer White, I humbly thank you for all your kind instructions, of which I shall now stand more in need than ever, as I shall have more duties to fulfil. I hope the remembrance of my past offences will keep me humble, and the sense of my remaining sin will keep me watchful. I set out in the world, Sir, with what is called a good natural disposition, but I soon found to my cost that without God's grace that will carry a man but a little way. A good temper is a good thing, but nothing but the fear of God can enable one to bear up against temptation, evil company, and evil passions. The misfortune of breaking my leg as I then thought it, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. It shewed me my own weakness, Sir, the value of the Bible, and the goodness of God. How many of my brother drivers have I seen

since that time, cut off in the prime of
 life by drinking, or by some sudden acci-
 dent, while I have not only been spared,
 but blessed and prospered. O Sir! it
 would be the joy of my heart, if some of
 my old comrades, good-natured, civil
 fellows, (whom I can't help loving) could
 see as I have done, the danger of evil
 courses before it is too late. Though
 they may not hearken to you, Sir, or any
 other *Minister*, they may believe *me*,
 because I have been one of them: and
 I can speak from experience, of the great
 difference there is, even as to worldly com-
 fort, between a life of sobriety and a life of
 sin. I could tell them, Sir, not as a thing I
 have read in a book, but as a truth I feel in
 my own heart, that to fear God and keep
 his commandments, will not only "bring
 a man peace at the last," but will make
 him happy *now*. And I will venture to say,
 Sir, that all the stocks, pillories, prisons,
 and gibbets in the land, though so very
 needful to keep bad men in order, yet
 will never restrain a good man from com-
 mitting evil, half so much as that single
 text, "how shall I do this great wicked-
 ness and sin against God?" Dr. Shepherd
 condescended to approve of what the

Farmer had said, kindly shook him by the hand, and took leave.

Thomas White had always been fond of singing, but he had for many years despised that vile trash which is too often sung in a stable-yard. One Sunday evening he heard his mistress at the Bear read some fine verses out of a fine book called the Spectator. He was so struck with the picture it contains of the great mercies of God, of which he had himself partaken so largely, that he took the liberty to ask her for these verses, and she being a very good-natured woman, made her daughter write out for the postilion the following.

HYMN ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

WHEN all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

O how shall words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare,
That glows within my ravish'd heart ?
But thou can'st read it there

Thy PROVIDENCE my life sustain'd,
 And all my wants redrest,
 When in the silent womb I lay,
 And hung upon the breast.

To all my weak complaints and cries,
 Thy mercy lent an ear,
 Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learnt
 To form themselves in prayer.

Unnumber'd comforts to my soul
 Thy tender care bestow'd,
 Before my infant heart conceiv'd
 From whom those comforts flow'd.

When in the slipp'ry path of YOUTH
 With heedless steps I ran,
 Thine arm, unseen, convey'd me safe,
 And led me up to MAN.

Thro' hidden dangers, toils, and deaths,
 It gently clear'd my way,
 And thro' the pleasing snares of vice,
 More to be fear'd than they.

When worn with sickness, oft hast THOU
 With health renew'd my face ;

And when in sins and sorrow sunk,
Reviv'd my soul with grace.

Thy bounteous hand, with worldly bliss,
Has made my cup run o'er ;
And in a kind and faithful friend,
Has doubled all my store.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts,
My daily thanks employ,
Nor is the least a thankful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.

Thro' ev'ry period of my life
Thy goodness I'll pursue,
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever grateful heart, O LORD !
Thy mercy shall adore.

Thro' all ETERNITY to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise,
For O ETERNITY's too short
To utter all Thy Praise.

Tom White, as we have shewn in the fore part of this history, from an idle post-boy was become a respectable farmer. God had blessed his industry, and he had prospered in the world. He was sober and temperate, and, as was the natural consequence, he was active and healthy. He was industrious and frugal, and became prosperous in his circumstances. This is in the ordinary course of Providence. But it is not a certain and necessary rule. *God maketh his sun to shine on the just and the unjust.* A man who uses every honest means of thrift and industry, will, in most cases, find success attend his labours. But still *the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* God is sometimes pleased for wise ends, to disappoint all the worldly hopes of the most upright man. His corn may be smitten by a blight. His barns may be consumed by fire. His cattle may be carried off by distemper. And to these and other misfortunes, he is as liable as the spendthrift or the knave. Success is the *common* reward of industry, but if it were its *constant* reward, the industrious would be tempted to look no further than the present state. They

would lose one strong ground of their faith. It would set aside the Scripture scheme. This world would be looked on as a state of reward, instead of a state of trial, and we should forget to look to a day of final retribution.

Farmer *White* never took it into his head, that because he paid his debts, worked early and late, and ate the bread of carefulness, he was therefore to come into no *misfortune like other folk*, but was to be free from the common trials and troubles of life. He knew that prosperity was far from being a sure mark of God's favour, and had read in good books, and especially in the bible, of the great poverty and afflictions of the best of men. Though he was no great scholar, he had sense enough to observe, that a time of public prosperity was not always a time of public virtue; and he thought that what was true of a whole nation might be true of one man. So the more he prospered the more he prayed that prosperity might not corrupt his heart. And when he saw lately signs of public distress coming on, he was not half so much frightened as some others were, because he thought

it might do us good in the long run ; and he was in hopes that a little poverty might bring on a little penitence. The great grace he laboured after was that of a cheerful submission. He used to say, that if the Lord's Prayer had only contained those four little words THY WILL BE DONE, it would be worth more than the biggest book in the world without them.

Dr. Shepherd the worthy vicar, (with whom the farmer's wife had formerly lived as housekeeper) was very fond of taking a walk with him about his grounds, and he used to say, that he learnt as much from the farmer as the farmer did from him. If the Doctor happened to observe, I am afraid the long rains will spoil this fine piece of oats, the farmer would answer, " but then, sir, think how good it is for the grass." If the Doctor feared the wheat would be but indifferent, the farmer was sure the rye would turn out well. When grass failed, he did not doubt but turnips would be plenty. Even for floods and inundations he would find out some way to justify Providence. "'Tis better," said he, " to have our lands a

little overflowed, than that the springs should be dried up, and our cattle faint for lack of water." When the drought came, he thanked God that the season would be healthy; and high winds, which frightened others, he said served to clear the air. Whoever, or whatever was wrong, he was always sure that PROVIDENCE was in the right. And he used to say, that a man with ever so small an income if he had but frugality and temperance, and cast off all vain desires, was richer than a lord who was tormented by vanity and covetousness. When he saw others in the wrong, he did not however abuse them for it, but took care to avoid the same fault. He had sense and spirit enough to break through many old but very bad customs of his neighbours. "If a thing is wrong in itself." (said he one day to farmer Hodges) "a whole parish doing it can't make it right. And as to it's being an old custom, why if it be a good one I like it the better for being old, because it has had the stamp of ages, and the sanction of experience on it's worth. But if it be old as well as bad, that is another reason for my trying to

put an end to it, that we may not mislead our children as our fathers have misled us."

The R O O F-R A I S I N G.

SOME years after he was settled, he built a large new barn. All the workmen were looking forward to the usual holiday of roof-raising. On this occasion it was a custom to give a dinner to the workmen, with so much liquor after it that they got so drunk, that they not only lost the remaining half days work, but they were not always able to work the next day.

Mrs. White provided a plentiful dinner for roof-raising, and gave each man his mug of beer. After a hearty meal they began to grow clamorous for more drink. The farmer said, "My lads, I don't grudge you a few gallons of ale merely for the sake of saving my liquor, though that is some consideration; but I never will, knowingly, help any man to make a beast of himself. I am resolved to

break through a bad custom. You ~~are~~ now well refreshed. If you will go cheerfully to your work, you will have half a day's pay to take on Saturday night more than you would if this afternoon were wasted in drunkenness. For this your families will be the better: whereas, were I to give you more liquor when you have already had enough, I should help to rob them of their bread. But I wish to shew you, that I have your good at heart full as much as my own profit. If you will now go to work, I will give you all another mug at night when you leave off. Thus your time will be saved, your families helped, and my ale will not go to make reasonable creatures worse than brute beasts."

Here he stopped. "You are in the right on't, Master," said Tom the thatcher; "You are a hearty man, Farmer," said John Plane the carpenter. "Come along boys," said Tim Brick the mason; so they all went merrily to work, fortified with a good dinner. There was only one drunken surly fellow who refused, that was Dick Guzzle the Smith. Dick never works above two or three days in the

week, and spends the others at the Red Lion. He swore that if the farmer did not let him have as much liquor as he liked at Roof-Raising, he would not strike another stroke, but he would leave the job unfinished, and he might get hands where he could. Farmer White took him at his word, and paid him off directly : glad enough to get rid of such a sot, whom he had only employed from pity to a large and almost starving family. When the men came for their mug in the evening, the farmer brought out the remains of the cold gammon : they made a hearty supper, and thanked him for having broke through a foolish custom, which was afterwards much left off in that parish, though Dick would not come into it and lost most of his work.

Farmer White's labourers were often complaining, that things were so dear that they could not buy a bit of meat. He knew it was partly true, but not entirely, for it was before these very hard times. One morning he stepped out to see how an outhouse which he was thatching went on. He was surprised to find the work at a stand. He walked over to the

thatcher's house. "Tom," said he, "I desire that piece of work may be finished directly. If a shower comes my grain will be spoiled." "Indeed, Master I shan't work to-day, nor to-morrow, neither," said Tom. "You forget that 'tis Easter Monday, and to-morrow is Easter Tuesday. And so on Wednesday I shall thatch away master. But 'tis hard if a poor man who works all the year may not enjoy these few holidays."

"Tom," said the farmer, "when these days were first put into our prayer-book, the good men who did it, little thought that the time would come when holyday should mean drunken-day. How much dost think now I shall pay thee for this piece of thatch?" "Why you know master you have let it to me by the great. I think between this and tomorrow night, as the weather is so fine, I could clear about four shillings, after I have paid my boy. But thatching does not come often, and other work is not so profitable." "Very well, Tom; and how much now do you think you may spend in these two holidays?" "Why master, if the ale is pleasant, and the company merry, I do

not expect to get off for less than three shillings." "Tom can you do pounds, shillings, and pence?" "I can make a little score master behind the kitchen door with a bit of chalk, which is as much as I want." "Well, Tom, add the four shillings you would have earned to the three you intend to spend, what does that make?" "Let me see! three and four make seven. Seven shillings master." "Tom, you often tell me the times are so bad that you can never buy a bit of meat. Now here is the cost of two joints at once; to say nothing of the sin of wasting time and getting drunk." I never once thought of that," said Tom. "Now Tom," said the farmer, "if I were you, I would step over to Butcher Jobbins's, buy a shoulder of mutton, which being left from Saturday's market you will get a little cheaper. This I would make my wife bake in a deep dish full of potatoes. I would then go to work, and when the dinner was ready I would go and enjoy it with my wife and children; you need not give the mutton to the children; the potatoes will have all the gravy, and be very savory for them." "Aye, but I've got no beer master, the times are so hard

that a poor man can't afford to brew a drop of drink now as we used to do."

"Times are bad, and malt is very dear Tom, and yet both don't prevent your throwing away seven shillings in keeping holiday. Now send for a quart of ale, as it is to be a feast; and you will even then be four shillings richer than if you had gone to the publick house. I would put by these four shillings, till I could add a couple to them; with this I could get a bushel of malt, and my wife should brew it, and you may take a pint at home of a night, which will do you more good than a gallon at the Red Lion." "I have a great mind to take your advice, master, but I shall be made such fun of at the Lion; they will so laugh at me if I don't go." "Let those laugh that win, Tom." "But master, I have got a friend to meet me there." "Then ask your friend to come and eat a bit of your cold mutton at night, and here is six-pence for another pot, if you will promise to brew a small cask of your own." "Thank you, master, and so I will; and I won't go to the Lion. Come boy, bring the helm, and fetch the ladder." And so Tom was upon the roof in a twinkling.

The SHEEP SHEARING.

Dr. Shepherd happened to say to Farmer white one day, "that there was nothing he disliked more than the manner in which sheep-shearing and harvest-home were kept by some in his parish. What, said the good Doctor, just when we are blest with these natural riches of our land, the fleece of our flocks; when our barns are crowned with plenty, and we have reaped the fruits of the earth in due season; is that very time to be set apart for ribaldry, and riot, and drunkenness? Do we thank God for his mercies by making ourselves unworthy and unfit to enjoy them?"

TO BE CONTINUED.